

Message Text

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FOR HODDING CARTER FROM TRATTNER

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:SOPN, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING JANUARY 19, 1978

NO. 11

1. FIVE-POWER MEETING ON HORN SITUATION: SPOKESMAN SAID
WE CONSULT WITH OUR ALLIES FROM TIME TO TIME ON IMPORTANT
WORLD DEVELOPMENTS, AND TOOK REQUESTS FOR FURTHER DETAILS.
(FYI, FULL GUIDANCE WAS IN HAND BUT IN DEFERENCE TO POS-
SIBLE SENSITIVITY ON PART OF EUROPEAN PARTICIPANTS, WE
WERE INSTRUCTED NOT TO GO FURTHER IN THIS BRIEFING. NOW
AWAITING IMMINENT GO-AHEAD TO PROVIDE DETAILS ON MEETING--
WHICH INVOLVES BRITISH, FRENCH, GERMANS, ITALIANS AND US,
AND WILL TAKE PLACE IN DEPARTMENT JANUARY 20.)

2. ETHIOPIA-SOMALIA: ASKED FOR OUR VIEW ON WHETHER SOMALI
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PULLBACK SHOULD PRECEDE CEASEFIRE OR NEGOTIATIONS,
SPOKESMAN SAID THIS IS SOMETHING TWO PARTIES TO CONFLICT
WOULD HAVE TO WORK OUT AND WE DID NOT WISH TO SUGGEST PUB-
LICLY IDEAS WE MIGHT HAVE. DOUBTLESS WE HAVE DISCUSSED
THIS SORT OF THING WITH THEM PRIVATELY, IN CONNECTION WITH
OUR FREQUENT URGING THAT CONFLICT BE ENDED. PRINCIPLE
EFFORT, IN ANY CASE HOWEVER, RESTS WITH OAU.

3. EVENTS IN JERUSALEM: RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS, SPOKESMAN REPEATED ESSENTIALS OF SECRETARY'S REMARKS TO PRESS EVENING OF JANUARY 18. HE DECLINED EMPHATICALLY WHEN ASKED WHO IS TO BLAME FOR HALT IN JERUSALEM TALKS, AND ADDED THAT IT IS PREMATURE AT THIS POINT TO SPECULATE ABOUT WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN, OR TO GET TOO EXCITED ABOUT CURRENT SITUATION UNTIL WE SEE WHERE IT SETTLES AND WHAT THE NEXT STEPS ARE GOING TO BE.

4. U.S. EXPULSION OF SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIAL: SPOKESMAN CONFIRMED THAT U.S. EMBASSY IN MOSCOW FIRST SECRETARY DONALD KURSCH WAS DECLARED PNG BY SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND IS DEPARTING MOSCOW AT SOVIET REQUEST. WE WISH MAKE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT KURSCH HAS DONE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING WRONG IN PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES IN MOSCOW AND ENGAGED IN NO ACTIVITIES INCOMPATIBLE WITH HIS DIPLOMATIC STATUS. SOVIET ACTION IN HIS CASE WAS CLEARLY TAKEN IN RETALIATION FOR RECENT EXPULSION FROM U.S. OF SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIAL ENGAGED IN FLAGRANTLY IMPROPER ACTIVITIES. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE CONSIDER SOVIET ACTION AGAINST KURSCH UNACCEPTABLE AND WE ARE DECLARING PNG AN EQUIVALENT OFFICIAL OF SOVIET EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON.

5. SPOKESMAN DECLINED TO ANSWER NUMEROUS ENSUING QUESTIONS ON NAME AND POSITION OF ORIGINALLY-EXPELLED SOVIET LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OFFICIAL OR NATURE OF HIS OFFENSE, ON IDENTITY OF SOVIET OFFICIAL NOW TO BE EXPELLED AS RESULT KURSCH PNG, ON POSSIBLE PRECEDENTS FOR SUCH A CHAIN OF EVENTS, AND ON OTHER ASPECTS OF EPISODE. CHRISTOPHER

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